

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-156. (cancelled).

157. (currently amended) A method for treating female urinary incontinence comprising,
inserting a shaft having a curved portion percutaneously ~~into a~~ through body tissue in a
patient;

extending the shaft ~~and~~ through ~~[[a]]~~ the patient's vaginal wall subsequent to inserting the
shaft through body tissue of a patient;

associating a sling assembly end with ~~an end of the shaft~~ a sling assembly receiving device
subsequent to ~~the shaft~~ extending the shaft through the vaginal wall; and

withdrawing the shaft to place at least a portion of the sling assembly under a urethra of the
patient.

158. (currently amended) The method of claim 157, wherein the sling assembly comprises an
element for receiving a distal end of ~~the~~ a shaft.

159. (previously presented) The method of claim 157 comprising inserting the shaft via an abdomen
of the patient.

160. (currently amended) The method of claim 157, wherein the ~~shaft~~ sling assembly receiving
device comprises a channel for receiving the sling assembly end.

161. (previously presented) The method of claim 160 comprising locking the sling assembly end in
the channel.

162. (previously presented) The method of claim 160 comprising unlocking the sling assembly end
from the channel subsequent to withdrawing the shaft.

163. (currently amended) The method of claim 157 comprising disassociating the sling assembly end
from the ~~shaft end~~ sling assembly receiving device subsequent to withdrawing the shaft.

164. (previously presented) The method of claim 157, wherein the sling assembly comprises a sling.

165. (previously presented) The method of claim 157, wherein the sling assembly comprises a sling and a pouch enclosing at least partially the sling.

166. (currently amended) The method of claim 165 comprising removing the sling from [[a]] the pouch subsequent to sling assembly placement.

167. (currently amended) The method of claim 157, wherein ~~the end of the shaft is~~ the sling assembly end is associated with a distal end of a shaft.

168. (currently amended) A method for treating female urinary incontinence comprising,
inserting a first shaft having a curved portion percutaneously ~~into a~~ through body tissue in a patient;
extending the first shaft and through [[a]] the patient's vaginal wall of a patient subsequent to inserting the first shaft through body tissue;
associating a sling assembly end to an end of ~~the~~ a second shaft subsequent to ~~the shaft~~
extending the first shaft through the vaginal wall; and
withdrawing at least one of the first and second shafts ~~shaft to pull at least a portion of the sling assembly through the vaginal wall~~ to place at least a portion of the sling assembly under a urethra of the patient.

169. (currently amended) The method of claim 168 comprising inserting at least one of the shaft first and second shafts via an abdomen of the patient.

170. (currently amended) The method of claim 168 comprising disassociating the sling assembly end with at least one of the first and second shafts ~~shaft~~ subsequent to withdrawing the shaft.

171. (previously presented) The method of claim 168, wherein the sling assembly comprises a sling.

172. (previously presented) The method of claim 168, wherein the sling assembly comprises a sling and a pouch enclosing at least partially the sling.

173. (previously presented) The method of claim 172 comprising removing the sling from the pouch.
174. (currently amended) A method for treating female urinary incontinence comprising,
inserting first and second shafts, each having a curved portion, percutaneously ~~into a~~ through
body tissue in a patient so that a distal tip of a shaft extends ~~and~~ through ~~[[a]]~~ the patient's vaginal
wall ~~of a patient~~;
- associating a first end of a sling assembly with the first shaft;
 - associating a second end of the sling assembly with the second shaft; and
 - placing at least a portion of the sling assembly under a urethra of the patient.
175. (currently amended) The method of claim 174, wherein the step of inserting comprises inserting
the first shaft into body tissue ~~and then~~ prior to inserting the second shaft into body tissue.
176. (currently amended) The method of claim 174 comprising inserting at least one of the first and
second shafts into body tissue via ~~the~~ an abdomen of the patient.
177. (previously presented) The method of claim 174 comprising withdrawing at least one of the
first and second shafts to place at least a portion of the sling assembly under a urethra of the patient.
178. (currently amended) The method of claim 174 comprising disassociating the first and second
assembly ends from the first and second shafts subsequent to withdrawing the first and second shafts
from the body.
179. (previously presented) The method of claim 174, wherein the sling assembly comprises a sling.
180. (previously presented) The method of claim 174, wherein the sling assembly comprises a sling
and a pouch for enclosing at least partially the sling.
181. (previously presented) The method of claim 180 comprising removing the sling from the pouch.
182. (currently amended) A method for treating female urinary incontinence comprising,

inserting a shaft having a curved portion percutaneously ~~into a body and~~ through body tissue
of a patient;

extending the shaft through ~~[[a]]~~ the patient's vaginal wall of a patient subsequent to
inserting the shaft through body tissue;

associating a sling assembly with an end of the shaft; and

withdrawing the shaft to place at least a portion of the sling assembly under ~~the~~ a urethra of
the patient.

183. (previously presented) The method of claim 182, wherein the associating comprises interfitting the sling assembly in a channel located at an end of the shaft.

184. (previously presented) The method of claim 182, wherein the associating comprises releasably interfitting the sling assembly in a channel located at an end of the shaft.

185. (previously presented) The method of claim 182 comprising dissociating the sling assembly from the shaft subsequent to withdrawing the shaft from the body of the patient.

186. (previously presented) The method of claim 182, wherein the sling assembly comprises a sling.

187. (currently amended) The method of claim 182, ~~wherein the sling assembly comprises an elongated extension located at an end of the sling assembly~~ comprising inserting the shaft via an abdomen of the patient.

188. (currently amended) The method of claim 182, wherein the sling assembly ~~comprises~~ is associated with an aperture located at an end of the shaft ~~sling assembly.~~

189. (previously presented) The method of claim 182, wherein the sling assembly comprises a sling and a pouch for enclosing at least partially the sling.

190. (currently amended) The method of claim 189, ~~wherein~~ comprising removing the sling from the pouch ~~comprises an opening intermediate to first and second ends of the sling assembly.~~

191. (previously presented) The method of claim 182 ~~189~~, wherein the end of the shaft is a distal end ~~pouch is substantially flat~~.

192. (new) The method of claim 157, wherein the shaft has a sharp point for dissecting tissue.

193. (new) The method of claim 157, wherein the shaft is solid.

194. (new) The method of claim 157, wherein the sling assembly comprises a detachable member attaching the sling assembly to a shaft.

195. (new) The method of claim 157, wherein the body tissue includes tissue between the patient's urethra and upper vaginal wall.

196. (new) The method of claim 157, comprising penetrating the patient's upper vaginal wall.

197. (new) The method of claim 159, comprising inserting the shaft through a suprapubic incision in the patient.

198. (new) The method of claim 157, wherein the sling assembly end is associated with an aperture of the sling assembly receiving device.

199. (new) The method of claim 198, wherein the aperture is defined by a ring.

200. (new) The method of claim 157, wherein the sling assembly receiving device includes a shaft.

201. (new) The method of claim 168, wherein the first shaft has a sharp point for dissecting tissue.

202. (new) The method of claim 168, wherein at least one of the first and second shafts is solid.

203. (new) The method of claim 168, wherein the body tissue includes tissue between the patient's urethra and upper vaginal wall.

204. (new) The method of claim 168, comprising penetrating the patient's upper vaginal wall.

205. (new) The method of claim 169, comprising inserting at least one of the first and second shafts through a suprapubic incision in the patient.

206. (new) The method of claim 174, wherein the first shaft has a sharp point for dissecting tissue.

207. (new) The method of claim 174, wherein at least one of the first and second shafts is solid.

208. (new) The method of claim 174, wherein the body tissue includes tissue between the patient's urethra and upper vaginal wall.

209. (new) The method of claim 174, comprising penetrating the patient's upper vaginal wall.

210. (new) The method of claim 176, comprising inserting at least one of the first and second shafts through a suprapubic incision in the patient.

211. (new) The method of claim 174, wherein at least one of associating the first end of the sling assembly with the first shaft and associating the second end of the sling assembly with the second shaft occurs prior to placing at least a portion of the sling assembly under a urethra of the patient.

212. (new) The method of claim 211, wherein both associating the first end of the sling assembly with the first shaft and associating the second end of the sling assembly with the second shaft occur prior to placing at least a portion of the sling assembly under a urethra of the patient.

213. (new) The method of claim 182, wherein the shaft has a sharp point for dissecting tissue.

214. (new) The method of claim 182, wherein the shaft is solid.

215. (new) The method of claim 182, wherein the sling assembly comprises a detachable member attaching the sling assembly to an end of the shaft.

216. (new) The method of claim 182, wherein the body tissue includes tissue between the patient's urethra and upper vaginal wall.

217. (new) The method of claim 182, comprising penetrating the patient's upper vaginal wall.

218. (new) The method of claim 187, comprising inserting the shaft through a suprapubic incision in the patient.

219. (new) The method of claim 188, wherein the aperture is defined by a ring.